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# Both Israel and the US learn some hard lessons from Pollard spy affair

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The so-called Pollard affair has graphically demonstrated the pitfalls of Israel's special relationship with the United States, American and Israeli officials say.

For Americans, it was a painful lesson on the limits of friendship between two nations, no matter how closely their interests seem to coincide. For Israelis, it was a bitter reminder of their nation's financial and political dependence on the US.

Sunday, Israel apologized for spying on the US and promised that any Israeli found responsible for conducting such activities would be held to account.

"I think it was pretty abject, pretty humble," says one former official. "Did we have to do it? I guess we didn't have any choice."

It took public pressure from the US State Department, and ultimately, from President Reagan before the Israelis finally issued the qualified apology, which American officials had expected would be made earlier last week.

"The Israelis just didn't realize the damage being done, not only in terms of American public opinion, but in terms of the trust the administration has in leaders here," says one Western diplomat.

Prime Minister Shimon Peres, speaking to a meeting of presidents of American Jewish organizations Monday, revealed that he had spoken on the phone with Secretary of State George P. Shultz Saturday to discuss a quick end to the affair.

The complex reasons for Israel's slow response, and its defensiveness as American pressure increased, are rooted in the psyche of its leaders and the nature of its fragile government, according to officials here and Western analysts.

At first, the government seemed stunned by the arrest Nov. 21 of Jonathan Jay Pollard, and the charges that he had been paid by Israel to supply it with top secret military documents. Pollard's wife, Anne, was later arrested for being in possession of classified documents.

Then officials started leaking complaints to the press about what they viewed as the US administration's overzealous pursuit of the case. Counter-

charges appeared in the nation's newspapers, alleging that American diplomats here routinely spy on Israel, a charge hotly denied by the Americans.

"It was a classic response of the Eastern European [born] leadership that still runs this country," says one senior official. "On the one hand, there is fear of the goy [gentiles] and on the other hand this desire to show them."

"The Israelis have this almost paranoid perception of the world around them," elaborates one Western diplomat. "People can be true friends to them, but they still believe that in the end, the only one you can count on is yourself and your family."

As the US stepped up pressure for full Israeli disclosure of why Mr. Pollard was hired, by whom, and how such an action was allowed, Mr. Peres, Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir met repeatedly to coordinate their response.

Pollard apparently was hired before the "national unity" government was formed last year. The unit he allegedly worked for operates out of the Defense Ministry, and the intelligence officers that run the unit have worked under both rightwing Likud and leftist Labor governments. That left a tangled web of responsibility in a government that is at best unstable and sharply divided.

The problem, one official said, was that the Israeli intelligence community opposed disclosure for fear of damage to the nation's intelligence network. And some Israeli politicians backed intelligence official's initial belief that the affair would die down if Israel delayed its response.

It is still not clear just what action will be taken against those responsible for the spying incident. Informed Western sources say the US is now confident that it will be allowed to interview diplomats who may have knowledge of the case. Peres and the Cabinet have offered firm assurances, the sources say, that the unit in the Defense Ministry will be disbanded and those found responsible will be fired.

Such steps will be politically difficult however, as one Israeli reporter pointed out, because in this broad-based government, almost every official who could be culpable has a political protector who is bound to protest any disciplinary actions.

The whole affair has also provided the Israelis with an embarrassing parallel to their own dispute with Egypt over the shooting deaths of seven Israeli tourists in the Sinai in October. Israel bitterly and publicly scored Egypt for not providing a full report or an apology for the incident.

Yet Egypt's response in this case was not dissimilar to Israel's response in the Pollard affair — the Egyptians attempted to minimize the impact of the shooting on overall Egyptian-Israeli relations. President Hosni Mubarak was harshly criticized here when he said it was an "isolated incident."

The same words were used, however, by Peres when he told American Jewish leaders here Monday that the Pollard affair was an "isolated incident" in relations between the US and Israel.